

13 February 2025

# Oracle transition for schools Update, Questions and Answers

## Update

This update provides information about the 3 main areas affected:

- *Conversion to full chequebook status*
- *Procurement of new HR and Payroll Providers*
- *The future of Schools Financial Services*

As ever, if you have any further questions or concerns, please contact via the usual email address [oracleschoolsrelationship@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:oracleschoolsrelationship@birmingham.gov.uk). Chris Etheridge, Oracle School Relationships Manager, will be also attending all Fora as appropriate, and can attend any Network or Consortia meetings upon request.

## Headlines / what's new

### 1. Changes to this update after half term

This is the last update in this format as we try to respond to feedback to ensure you can find the information that you need. Since the SFS review has been completed this information can be removed, and since schools have already converted to full chequebook status the decision has been made to split this update into two. Firstly, a Finance Update, which alongside important project information, will contain important documents for all schools to access regardless of their financial status. Secondly, a HR, Payroll and Pensions Update. Both documents will contain both up to date and archived Q&A. We hope that this makes it a little easier to navigate and find the information that you need.

### 2. PAYE reference update

We are aware that one or two schools have been having issues with obtaining their PAYE reference from HMRC. The BCC compliance team has been working alongside these schools to find out the issues arising and how they can be addressed. There will be an update to the guidance in the next document.

### 3. March HT/SBM Drop-In date and link

There was great attendance at the February HT/SBM Drop-In on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February which focused on the more detailed statutory duties document shared with schools at the end of January. Our next general HT/SBM Drop-In is scheduled for Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 10am. The focus of this will be confirmed nearer the date, but will link to project progress and queries coming from schools. The link is below:

**Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)**

**[Join the meeting now](#)**

Meeting ID: 357 087 194 767

Passcode: tU9rc6yG



#### 4. Letter to staff from BCC regarding change or HR/Payroll provider

We want to remove any unnecessary burden on Headteachers and contact school staff directly with some important information relating to their school's change of HR and Payroll provider. Especially since this change has come to be since BCC is stopping trading these services. Headteachers of schools leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> March will receive this letter in the first week back. Future cohorts will receive it in due course as part of the off-boarding process. In this letter there will be information for staff about the following:

- Will they notice any difference?
- Why they will receive a P45 (and why they should ignore it).
- Their access to Oracle Employee Self-Serve (ESS) is stopping.
- How to check their pension details online.
- Why Schools leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> March do not get P60s for their staff and how staff will be able to get the information they need about their gross pay earnings, alongside any statutory deductions for the previous tax year up to April 5th.

A generic copy of this letter (no dates and not including the March P60 issue) will be attached to the next update so that Headteachers know what to expect.

#### 5. April HR/Payroll Leavers

There are some key dates and information that schools leaving HR/Payroll on 30<sup>th</sup> April should be aware of.

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February Headteachers will receive a letter outlining what to expect over the coming days. This will include information as outlined later in this update as to how they will receive the data in school. The drop-in dates and links in that letter are also included below:

- **Off-boarding data transfer drop-in**

10am Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

**Microsoft Teams** [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 321 851 399 049

Passcode: Lc3FY9bM

- **Pre-dummy run 1 follow-up drop-in (with providers)**

10am Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March

**Microsoft Teams** [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 388 455 916 336

Passcode: L6c8gh9L

#### 6. Some date changes

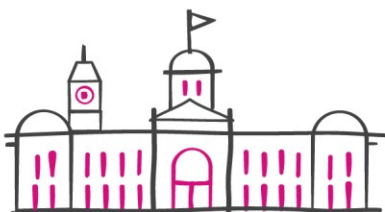
Please note that there are one or two date changes from previous updates. This is in response to feedback from schools and we hope these make the meetings easier to attend. These changes have been highlighted purple in the update. **Mandatory VAT training - change of date for session 2**

Please note that the VAT training date in half-term has been moved to Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 12:00-13:00. The link is below:

**Microsoft Teams** [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 322 545 792 75



Passcode: A7Y9r9LS

## 7. Finance Update

A reminder that your **Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS)** return should be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March and submitted to [SFS@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:SFS@birmingham.gov.uk)

This week's update also contains information around the following:

- Dcal update during your transition from Oracle
- Information on handling Rec Files during chequebook transition

Please note that in the **next update on 27<sup>th</sup> February**, there will be information about the **year-end guidance documents** for 2024-5 and **school budgets 2025-6** information for mainstream, early years and high needs settings.

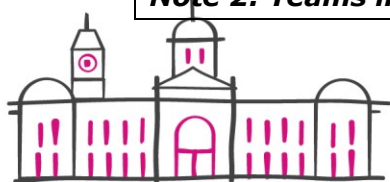
## 1. Conversion to full chequebook status

All schools have received the proposed date for them to transition to chequebook status, which can also be found at this link: [Dates of schools transitions from Oracle](#). It is also important that you convert to chequebook status before you can change HR and payroll provider. Any queries about your conversion should be directed to [FullCBSmailbox@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:FullCBSmailbox@birmingham.gov.uk) in the first instance, whilst the officers responsible for working with your schools once your date is finalised will be Linda Sewell and Charlotte Buchanan, who will support you through the process.

### Ongoing chequebook transition drop-in sessions

As part of the pre and post conversion support from BCC finance, there will be drop-in sessions available, as per the timetable below. The meetings are open to all schools and links are included for the February meetings. Others to follow.

Drop-In Sessions Pre-Conversion		Drop-In Sessions Post-Conversion	
<b>Feb-25</b>		<b>Feb-25</b>	
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> 10am – 12pm <b>Microsoft Teams <a href="#">Need help?</a></b> <b><a href="#">Join the meeting now</a></b> Meeting ID: 359 185 345 654 Passcode: NA9Dq78y		Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2 - 4pm <b>Microsoft Teams <a href="#">Need help?</a></b> <b><a href="#">Join the meeting now</a></b> Meeting ID: 352 815 794 949 Passcode: pG3a7yT7 <i>*Please note this is a change of date</i>	
<b>Mar-25</b>		<b>Mar-25</b>	
Tuesday 4th	10am – 12pm	Wednesday 5th	10am – 12pm
Tuesday 18th	10am – 12pm	Wednesday 19th	10am – 12pm
<b>Apr-25</b>		<b>Apr-25</b>	
Tuesday 8th	10am – 12pm	Wednesday 2nd	10am – 12pm
- last date for 1st May transitions		Wednesday 30th	10am – 12pm
		<b>May-25</b>	
<b>Note 1: Easter holiday 11th-28th April</b>		Wednesday 7th	10am – 12pm
<b>Note 2: Teams links to be added</b>		Wednesday 21st	10am – 12pm



There are several documents to support schools with their conversion here:  
[Support and guidance for schools converting to chequebook status](#)

These include:

- Full preparation document on conversion to chequebook status
- Summary document
- A briefing note for governors and/or school staff
- A slide deck for governors and/or school staff
- Operational guidance for schools transitioning to chequebook status.
- The [Framework of financial delegation for governing bodies](#)

### **CFR Mapping (consistent financial reporting)**

Please find instructions for adding the new CFR codes and mapping information:

- [CFR COA mapping](#)
- [Adding new ledger codes and importing CFR mapping](#)

The import file will be sent out separately. Codes can start being added before CFR is switched on the system so you can start doing this now before conversions. Should you have any queries please contact your SFS officer.

### **SUN (Service User Numbers) for your new payroll provider**

Please be advised that all SUN forms previously sent via email or posted on the school noticeboard are now obsolete. The [latest SUN setup details form](#) is the only one that needs to be completed in relation to the school's new payroll provider.

We are working with Barclays Bank to set up Service User Numbers (SUN) to enable Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS) payments to be made for payroll. As soon as the school has agreed a new payroll provider, please complete the attached form and return to [FullCBSMailbox@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:FullCBSMailbox@birmingham.gov.uk).

The application can take up to 6 weeks, so it is important that you complete and submit the attached form on time and with all the information requested. If you are unsure of anything then please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### Important notes:

- Complete **only** if you will be remaining with Barclays.
- The school must have transitioned to full chequebook status and chosen a new payroll provider before you can apply for a SUN.
- If the payroll provider will be taking the payroll by Direct Debit, there is no need to complete the form.
- Schools who have opted for another banking provider will need to make arrangements with them directly to set up SUN information
- If the school have already completed and submitted a form with all the required information, there is no need to do a new one.

### **Barclays Bank, Schools Accounts - Interest and Charges 2024/25**

We now have the agreed interest payable and charges to pass onto schools that remain with Barclays. The document can be found at this link: [Barclays Bank schools accounts - interest and charges 2024-25](#).



### Barclays Bank anti-fraud webinar

As part of the transition to chequebook school, for those schools banking with Barclays under the corporate Birmingham City Council (BCC) contract, the following link will give you access to webinars hosted by the bank on fraud. We strongly recommend you watch these webinars to help you both identify and prevent incidents of bank fraud.

<https://www.barclayscorporate.com/insights/fraud-protection/fraud-webinar/>

If you have any questions or if your school is a victim of fraud, please contact Barclays directly on the contact details below.

Service / Email / Telephone contact options	
<b>Client Servicing – For all servicing needs</b>	
<a href="mailto:clientservicesupport-1@barclays.com">clientservicesupport-1@barclays.com</a>	
0330 156 0008	
<b>Option 1</b> Iportal / Barclays.net Queries	
<b>Option 2</b> General Account Servicing	
<b>Option 3</b> BACSETL IP Support	
<b>Option 4</b> File Gateway Queries	
<b>Option 5</b> Cheque and Cash Queries	
<b>Option 6</b> Specialist Support (BMAP, Swift, SEPA, Lockbox or Direct Data)	
<b>Post - Client Support Process Fulfilment Team,</b> Radbroke Hall, Knutsford, WA16 9EU	
Report Fraud	<a href="tel:03301560155">0330 156 0155</a>
Suspicious Email	<a href="mailto:internetsecurity@barclays.co.uk">internetsecurity@barclays.co.uk</a>
Mandate Change Team	0800 206 2000
Barclaycard Assistance Team	0800 008 008

### Other BCC Schools Finance information

Please find the **Schools Financial Timetable** April 25 – March 26 at this link: [Schools finance timetable 2025/26](#).

For schools with current deficit positions there are two important documents below to help you develop your **Deficit Recovery Plan** (DRP), which must be submitted 8 weeks before FCB conversion. For any school with a deficit position converting in March, your deadline has been extended to 20<sup>th</sup> January.

- [BCC schools deficit procedures Dec 2024](#)
- [Deficit recovery plan template 2024/25](#)

### Dcal Update during your transition from Oracle

When transitioning from Oracle, you can continue to use your NatWest purchase card. When doing this after transitioning you should still clear Dcal in the normal process until you are notified by the service that your school has been swapped over to the new process following which you can cease to use Dcal. You must await confirmation, but please note that this can take some time. If you do not clear Dcal in the meantime, the gross will be charged to the school rather than the net amount.



### Information on handling Rec Files during chequebook transition

For schools that are transitioning to cheque book, reconciliation files will continue and be available for schools to download, however after the date of conversion schools are advised **NOT** to download or run any of the reconciliation files that are sent. The BCC Schools Finance Team will notify the ICT Team of the date of transition to prevent the production of these files being created. There will be an overlap of the files where the BCC Schools Finance Team will carry out a monthly sweep to identify these transactions and will adjust your school's monthly instalment accordingly. The last rec file dates are shown below for each tranche of FCB conversion.

- For the schools transitioning in February, the last reconciliation file will be week 9, commencing 24<sup>th</sup> February.
- For the schools transitioning in March, the last reconciliation file will be week 14, commencing 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- There are no schools converting in April.
- For the schools transitioning in May, the last reconciliation file will be week 22, commencing 26<sup>th</sup> May

## 2. Procurement of new HR and payroll providers

We are aware from our self-assessment survey, calls and visits to schools, that many schools are on the way to finding their new HR and Payroll providers.

**Once you have confirmed your new provider, we would respectfully ask that you ensure you update both BCC HR and payroll of the company you are moving to and the date you would like to leave.** This will ensure that we can support a smooth transition and liaise with your new provider in the best way possible for what they need. Please contact:

- [Heather.Wheeler-Jones@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Heather.Wheeler-Jones@birmingham.gov.uk) regarding HR
- [Seamus.Cooney@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Seamus.Cooney@birmingham.gov.uk) for payroll

Please note that **at the point of off boarding, access to Oracle and the HR website will stop.** Schools will need to make sure that employees are aware of this and download any documents from Oracle, such as payslips and P60s, that they might want to have access to.

### Process and documents for off-boarding

We now have dates scheduled for drop-in sessions, by cohort, as they receive their off-boarding data. The table below shows the off-boarding data transfer drop-in during the week you will receive your data, followed by a pre dummy-run 1 follow-up drop-in during the second week of the following month. Please note that your new HR and Payroll providers are invited to these follow-up meetings, as they may be best placed to help iron out any issues arising.

On the Monday of the week you will receive your data, your Headteacher will receive a letter from Education highlighting what to expect. They should forward this to the relevant staff involved in school as soon as possible. Your data from HR and Payroll will then arrive in two separate emails, possibly on different days due to the way it is generated. The drop-ins below give an opportunity to discuss this information in the week that you receive it. It is vitally important to pass this data on to your new provider, in whatever format they would like it, as



soon as possible. Please note that it is important that any changes after you have received your off-boarding data, that take place before your first payroll run are both entered on Oracle and communicated clearly with your new payroll provider.

### Example documents

Example documents that you will receive from HR and Payroll, and which will be explained at the first drop-in, can be found here:

- [Example HR TUPE template](#)
- [Example Payroll TUPE report](#)
- [Example HR Absence report](#)
- [Example Payroll FPS report](#)

There are also other reports to expect from Payroll over the week, such as

- Copy payslips
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor contact details, such as unions, BHSF etc

### Casual Employees

You will find details of the schools casual employees in the TUPE payroll report, as this is reports on all individuals on the schools payroll.

Casual employees will NOT show on the HR TUPE report as, this only reports on contracted employees.

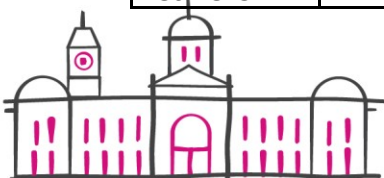
There will be a new, dedicated mailbox to send Schools Payroll Off Boarding Queries: [SchoolsPayrollOffBoardingQueries@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolsPayrollOffBoardingQueries@birmingham.gov.uk)

Any queries around HR off-boarding information should be directed to [heather.wheeler-jones@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:heather.wheeler-jones@birmingham.gov.uk)

There have been some questions raised about how the data is sent to schools from HR and Payroll once the school begins its off-boarding process. To ensure the receipt of this important data in school, the reports have been sent to those employees who hold either a form raiser or form authoriser role for the school in Oracle. The employees who hold these roles, have access to confidential and sensitive employee data for all employees within the school and have been given this responsibility at a school level. The provision of these reports does not provide them with information that they do not already have access to and as such does not raise concerns regarding GDPR.

### Drop-In dates and links

Cohort	Off-boarding data transfer drop-in	Pre dummy-run 1 follow-up drop-in <i>(Providers to be invited)</i>
2 – April leavers	10am Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> February <b>Microsoft Teams <a href="#">Need help?</a></b> <b><a href="#">Join the meeting now</a></b> Meeting ID: 321 851 399 049 Passcode: Lc3FY9bM	10am Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> March <b>Microsoft Teams <a href="#">Need help?</a></b> <b><a href="#">Join the meeting now</a></b> Meeting ID: 388 455 916 336 Passcode: L6c8gh9L
3 – May leavers	10am Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March	10am Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> April
4 – June leavers	10am Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> April	10am Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May



<b>5</b> – July leavers	<i>TBC – Under review</i>	<i>TBC - Under Review</i>
<b>6</b> August leavers	10am Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> June	10am Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> July

### Procedure for registering with HMRC for a new PAYE Scheme

Please note: Not all providers will be able to assist in this regard and schools will need to undertake the steps in the process on their own without support from their provider where that is the case.

1. A month before the transfer date the designated person at the “new” payroll provider will call the HMRC on the Employers’ Helpline: 0300 200 3200 and inform the call handler, the school is moving to new payroll provider on a set date and a new Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) scheme is required.
2. The designated person at the new payroll provider will need to give the full name & address of the school and if requested, the Head Teacher’s details full name, their National Insurance Number.
3. The new PAYE reference will be sent out by HMRC to the new payroll provider’s office, in the form of a letter by external post within 7 days.
4. When new PAYE Scheme reference number is received, the application process for the “activation” code must be done on the [www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services](http://www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services)
5. The person will need to create a gateway user ID account and need to follow the instructions on the website, to register the new PAYE Scheme.
6. The person will be given the option to request an activation code, and the associated pin code will go direct to the registered school address by letter. (N.B. This cannot be sent to directly to the new payroll provider)
7. The pin code must be entered within a certain time limit (we understand ten working days), or another code will have to be applied for.
8. Activate the account by inputting the pin number and you will then be able to add the PAYE Scheme for Employers.
9. A reminder there is plenty of guidance on the HMRC website: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

### Salary Sacrifice Schemes

The councils’ Total Reward team administers the salary sacrifice schemes for our employees. This includes our Cycle2work scheme and the Pluxee Childcare Voucher scheme.

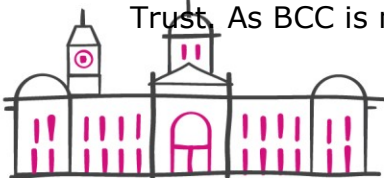
#### BCC schools changing their Payroll Provider

If your school chooses to change payroll provider, moving away from BCC payroll Services, we lose our access to make the necessary salary deductions from your employees pay. This will alter the way we operate the schemes. To allow the employees to continue to benefit, we will need your new payroll provider to make the monthly pre-tax salary deductions, we can then invoice the school for the monthly cost of the bike loan or childcare vouchers.

When the decision is taken to change payroll provider, can your administrative team please email our team address [Myrewards@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Myrewards@birmingham.gov.uk), we can then discuss any questions you may have on the schemes and work with you to arrange the deductions and invoices.

#### BCC schools converting to Academies

When a school’s covert to Academies, the employer changes from BCC to the Trust. As BCC is no longer the employer under HMRC rules we must cease





providing salary sacrifice benefits to the Academies' employees. If this is due to happen, please let us know as soon as possible so we can advise and prepare for the change.

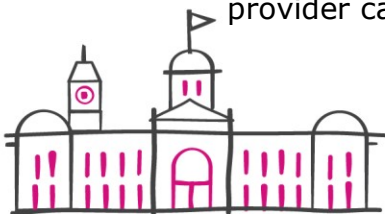
**Please note:** In 2018 the UK Government closed all childcare schemes from accepting any new customers, we therefore cannot accept any new requests to join this scheme.

**What BCC will continue to do as part of our role as the employer in schools to meet our statutory duties after you move to a new HR/Payroll provider**

STATE FUNDED		
FUNDING 'MAINTAINED' AND DISTRIBUTED BY LOCAL AUTHORITY	FUNDING DISTRIBUTED DIRECTLY	
Community Schools Community Special Schools Maintained Nurseries Voluntary Controlled Pupil Referral Unit	Voluntary Aided Schools Foundation Schools Trust Schools	Academies Free Schools
Employer	Employer	Employer
BCC	Board of Governors	'The Trust'

A detailed [Statutory duties and ongoing compliance and assurance in schools](#) document has been shared with schools, showing the responsibilities of both BCC and the school/new provider for each process within the key functions remaining (summarised below). There was a HT/SBM drop-in focussing on this document on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February and maintained schools where BCC is the employer will receive a HR toolkit containing any checklists, templates and further guidance as they leave the service.

- **Pensions** - pensions funds still need to receive a single return from BCC so we will be receiving returns from schools or their payroll providers, checking and passing on to the pensions fund. This work will likely look very similar to now.
- **Assurance** - we will need to make sure that schools and their new providers are still operating under BCC terms and conditions and stay compliant with what we would expect. This might involve spot checks of contracts or job adverts, monitoring equal pay or what pay and allowances staff are getting.
- **Reward and Pay** - we still need to make sure that schools staff are being paid properly and have access to all their usual benefits like cycle to work scheme. This will include things like communicating policy changes or pay awards to schools and providers.
- **Employee and Industrial Relations** - we will remain the employer of some schools' staff so we need to make sure we are there in those key steps like dismissals, disciplinaries or managing school union relationships. This might look like reviewing and signing off a school's restructure business case or sending out a dismissal letter, but we will only be acting on those steps where we have responsibility as the employer. If you need ER advice, you will have to ensure that your new provider can offer this.



- **Compliance** - we still need to make sure staff in schools have all the right qualifications and checks in place. This might look like checking teaching assistants have appropriate qualifications or someone has the right to work in the UK before they take up a role in a school.

As you can tell, some of this work will rely on us working with you and your new provider to share information so our next step in the project is to define the level and frequency of reporting information required from BCC maintained schools to allow these processes to take place. We have begun working with schools' chosen providers, where we know who they are, to see how we can reduce the burden on schools. As this work develops, we will keep you up to date so that you can incorporate any reporting requirements into your asks from providers.

As this is no longer a traded service, this will be a significant change to what we have been offering to schools. The focus will be making sure that all of BCC's policies and procedures are being adhered to by schools and their chosen providers, with BCC acting as a final backstop to help avoid and identify the incorrect application of policy, procedure or T&Cs and that they are rectified by schools if necessary. We will be fully focussed on maintained schools, where our duties apply. For those who purchase the service, you will still have a named point of contact within BCC in the form of the School and Governor Support team who will continue to work closely with you, but we would encourage all schools to seek a provider who can pick up the advice and support you are used to receiving from your HR Advisor.

### **Pensions Update**

Post transition, BCC will remain responsible for transferring payments to pension scheme providers and keeping both historic and future service records up to date for both the Teachers' Pension (TPS) and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Staff should not notice a change from their point of view, with your new providers providing the data and payments direct to BCC. However, it is always good practice for staff to keep track of their pensions to check that they are correct. We have included details about how both teaching and support staff in schools can do this below, and how to register if they have not already.

### **Teachers Pensions**

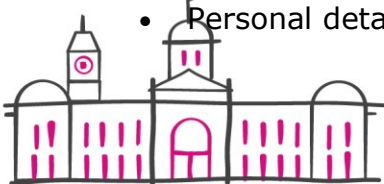
If you haven't done so already, all teachers and tutors are encouraged to register on **MPO (My Pension Online)** and regularly check their details. It's especially important that you check your service history to ensure the correct details are held as this is what Teachers Pensions will base your benefits on. Any errors not identified now may result in delays when calculating your pension benefits in the future, or in an incorrect pension amount being paid. MPO allows members to keep on track with their pension. They can:-

- view their Benefit Statement
- contact the scheme with pension related queries
- change their personal details
- use the helpful online calculators to plan their retirement
- apply for certain flexibilities to enhance their pension
- update their beneficiaries.

### **Registering**

To register for MPO you will need:

- Personal details



- National insurance number
- Personal email address

### **Service/General Queries**

If you do have any queries relating to the details held or your service history, please email [teacherspensions@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:teacherspensions@birmingham.gov.uk) and include the following; pension membership/reference number, national insurance number and details & date(s) of any discrepancies.

### **Local Government Pension Scheme**

If you are support staff in schools and a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme, you are now able to view your pension details online. This is done by accessing the WMPF webportal found here;

<https://www.wmpfonline.com/pension-portal>

### **Registering**

If you are a new user, you will need a Personal Identification Code to register for the Pension Portal. If you do not have your code to hand, please [click here](#) to request it through our enquiry form.

The benefits of using the Pensions Portal:

- Calculate an estimate of your pension benefits
- View and print your benefit statements
- View and update your contact details and other personal information
- Send questions securely to us and view your responses

If you have further queries about your LGPS pension that aren't covered on the portal, the BCC Pensions Team can be contacted at;

[localgovernmentpensions@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:localgovernmentpensions@birmingham.gov.uk)

## **3. The future of Schools Financial Services**

As part of the Oracle transition for schools, we needed to review and adjust charges for Schools Financial Services to ensure that it can reach a break-even position each year. This redesigned offer was shared with schools in November, with the deadline for returning your SFS contract by Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January to enable a swift completion of the review of this service.

Now that we have a clear understanding of how many schools have committed to continue with the Schools Financial Services, we have completed our review and decided about its future.

**It is our pleasure to inform you that SFS will continue to trade and provide the excellent and well appreciated service it offers to schools.** The transition to full chequebook status for all schools, as part of the Oracle transition, means that the redesigned service meets the needs of schools, without significant increases in costs.

I hope you will agree that this is great news, and a credit to the hard work of both schools and colleagues at BCC to ensure that we had the information needed to make an informed decision. We would like to thank schools for their swift return of contracts whilst dealing with other aspects of the Oracle transition. We would also like to thank SFS colleagues for their tireless work to move schools to full chequebook status, whilst also working under the uncertainty of this review. We are delighted that the future of the service is secured and appreciate the relief this will bring to both schools and colleagues.



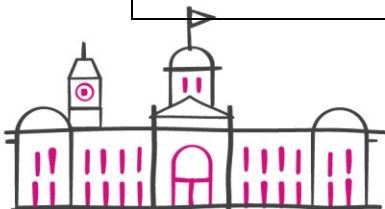
If you did not return your SFS contract by the deadline, but would like to renew it, please do this ASAP or there is a possibility there may not be staff available to allocate to your school in April if we are not aware of your intentions. A copy of the **Schools Financial Services SLA for 2025-26**, alongside Sue Harrison's accompanying letter sent to schools on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November, can be found here:

- [SLA confirmation letter from Dr Sue Harrison](#)
- [Schools Financial Services provision 2025](#)

**To get contracts** please select an SLA and email [Linda.A.Brighton@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.A.Brighton@birmingham.gov.uk) to confirm. You will then receive a confirmation email with the contracts to follow. Please note that this is slightly different to how it has been in previous years due to the new SLAs.

#### 4. Other information

<p><b>NEW Links to previous documents and recordings</b> <i>An archive of key documents published in these updates since September 2024</i></p>
<p><b>Sue Harrison's webinar</b> on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September: <a href="#">Link to webinar recording and slides</a></p>
<p>The link to the <b>Business Case outlining the recommendation made to cabinet:</b> <a href="#">Decision Details: Alternative Solution for Schools HR, Payroll and Finance Business Case (cmis.uk.com)</a></p>
<p><a href="#">BCC HR Services SLA 2024-25</a></p>
<p><a href="#">BCC Payroll and pensions SLA 2024-25</a></p>
<p>The <b>market research document from the options appraisal</b> which informed the business case: <a href="#">Oracle for schools – market research.</a></p>
<p><b>A pack for you to use with governors</b> around the recommendations that went to cabinet: <a href="#">Governor pack Oracle for schools</a></p>
<p><b>Governor Drop-In 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b> recording can be found here: <a href="#">Governor Drop-in webinar 15.10.24</a></p>
<p>BCC Finance webinars on <b>The process of moving to chequebook status</b> Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October: <a href="#">Recordings and presentations from school webinars.</a> Week of 11<sup>th</sup> November: <a href="#">Going chequebook transition drop-in - presentation</a></p>
<p>A link to the slides from the <b>DfE buying for schools team webinars and a Q&amp;A</b> published by them following the first one can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">DfE Buying for Schools webinar presentation October 2024</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DfE get help buying for schools Q&amp;A</a></li> </ul>
<p>To read more about the DfE buying for schools team service, you can visit the page: <a href="https://gethelpbuyingforschools.campaign.gov.uk/">https://gethelpbuyingforschools.campaign.gov.uk/</a></p>



There have now been two **follow-up webinars by the DfE buying for schools team**, for schools who completed their expressions of interest. The presentations went into detail about the level of support the DfE team will give to schools in HR & Payroll procurement, alongside the process involved. They also gave an overview of the options schools have if they decide to take up the support offered and an indicative timeline they will work towards, including the next steps after the Expressions of Interest are finalised. The slides from the webinars can be found here: [DfE follow-up webinar slides 28 November 2024](#). A question-and-answer summary from the meetings, compiled by the DfE, can be found here: [DfE payroll and HR questions and answers](#).

In November, our drop-in focused on the **off-boarding process and timelines** and the slides from that session can be found here: [Offboarding HTSBM drop in - 20th November 2024](#).

The slides from the December drop-in are now also available here: [Statutory Duties HTSBM Drop-in 10 December 2024](#). The meeting had a focus around the **statutory duties remaining for BCC once schools have moved HR and Payroll provider**, but also addressed questions from the November drop-in, around the PAYE reference change and possible implications.

#### **DfE buying for schools team**

There have now been two follow-up webinars by the DfE buying for schools team, for schools who completed their expressions of interest. The presentations went into detail about the level of support the DfE team will give to schools in HR & Payroll procurement, alongside the process involved. They also gave an overview of the options schools have if they decide to take up the support offered and an indicative timeline they will work towards, including the next steps after the Expressions of Interest are finalised. The slides from the webinars can be found here: [DfE follow-up webinar slides 28 November 2024](#). A question-and-answer summary from the meetings, compiled by the DfE, can be found here: [DfE payroll and HR questions and answers](#).

## Questions and Answers

The Questions and Answer section of this update is ordered into the 3 main areas affected by the decision for easy access.

- *Conversion to full chequebook status*
- *Procurement of new HR and Payroll Providers*
- *The future of Schools Financial Services*

Please note that it is not possible to include every single question asked in the various drop-in sessions, so it is vitally important that you attend these where possible to ensure you get answers to specific questions you need, if not included here. The previous Q&A has now been archived with other historic questions: [Archived Oracle Transition QA](#). *New questions have been added in purple.*

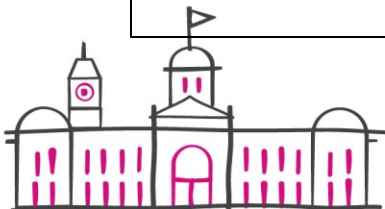


## 1. Questions and answers on the transition to full chequebook status

Questions	Answers
How will we be made aware of the date that we are supposed to be transitioning to full chequebook status?	BCC schools finance has already emailed all schools with their proposed date for transition. This list can be found here <a href="#">Dates of schools transition from Orade</a>
Can we challenge this date if we are unable to achieve transition in that timescale.	BCC are keen to work with schools to support the process and schools have been ordered by their potential readiness due to EPA / Online access etc. However, please email <a href="mailto:FullCBSMailbox@birmingham.gov.uk">FullCBSMailbox@birmingham.gov.uk</a> if you have any concerns about the date you have been given and SFS will work with you.
If our school is in a deficit position, does this affect the date?	To allow the move to new HR and payroll providers, which depend on schools being FCB, all schools are moving by March 2025 except for those with deficit budgets. BCC will work on financial recovery plans with these schools and they will transition to FCB status in May 2025.
We need to know what happens if the school is in a deficit position. Can you still get a bank account and an overdraft?	Yes, you can get a bank account with Barclays, but schools with deficits will be contacted individually about their transition to ensure that BCC can support then accordingly.
What support will we have through this transition?	There is SFS support available that can be accessed via emailing <a href="mailto:sfs@birmingham.gov.uk">sfs@birmingham.gov.uk</a> . There are also other schools who have volunteered to be chequebook buddies and BCC finance will attempt to link schools together as required.
Do we only get support to move chequebook if we already buy SFS? What about the schools who do not buy into SFS?	All schools will be supported by BCC in transition to chequebook status regardless of their financial support provider. Following transition, SFS can still support your school if you sign up to their SLA.
Will BCC provide the training required for the move to cheque book status free of charge?	Any training regarding the transition from both BCC and Barclays Bank, will be free of charge.
Can we use our existing Barclays accounts?	Any existing Barclays current account can be converted and will be moved over to become the full chequebook account. There will be no change to sort code or account number. This change is also instant.
What about if the school decides to go with another bank?	If you choose another provider, such as Lloyds, the process can take up to 12 weeks.



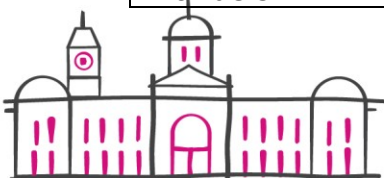
<p>If we don't have enough cash funds to pay the monthly payroll due to cashflow issues, how would this be resolved, and can we have assurance that we will be supported by BCC.</p>	<p>BCC would never want to have a school hold on to supplier invoices or not be able to pay staff. When a school needs to have a cash advance then this will be made available. The school would then need to agree a repayment plan with BCC. We are also continuing to develop our monthly cash sheets so that funding goes into schools as quickly as possible. For example, the mainstream schools s251 funding is paid at the beginning of each month, which represents a significant amount of the funding schools receive.</p> <p>We will also not deduct payroll in the month of transition, so that schools have a buffer while we are agreeing final balances to transfer. We intend to complete recs within the month and transfer balances by the beginning of the following month.</p>
<p>The offboarding process for HR and Payroll is linked to being a chequebook school. Is there any information around this process and the associated timelines so we can plan what is best for our school.</p>	<p>The November Drop-In session for schools was focused on off-boarding and has information about the process and timelines in the slides found here: <a href="#">Offboarding HTSBM drop in - 20th November 2024.</a></p>
<p>We bank with Lloyds currently, but most of the schools converting to chequebook status will be with Barclays, as is BCC - will this therefore cause us issues should we require a cash advance to pay the payroll?</p>	<p>BCC, given the choice, would prefer all schools to use the same bankers, but that decision clearly rests with governors. BCC will treat all maintained schools the same regardless of which bank they use.</p>
<p>Does Barclays offer BACS?</p>	<p>Not BACS as such, but it is basically the same, online banking with any payments made within 3 days.</p>
<p>Can chequebook schools make purchases using debit card, or will we have to use the current purchase cards? If the latter, how does that work?</p>	<p>If schools remain with Barclays, then they will not get a debit card as our purchase card contract is with NatWest. Therefore, you will continue to use your NatWest purchase card if you have one. If not, application and contact details are in the documents provided for conversion.</p>
<p>Would we still use Dcal? and have our physical cards?</p>	<p>Yes, DCal will still be used with your existing cards. There is no change planned for this at present.</p>
<p>What happens to the school's carry forward?</p>	<p>Surplus carry forwards will be paid to schools to hold themselves once final balances are agreed.</p>



Can you please advise what information you will provide to confirm the balances which will be brought forward upon transition to chequebook status and will there be guidance sent to schools with regards to the balance sheet figures at the conversion date to cheque book, to ensure accuracy.	Balances will be agreed and confirmed with individual schools before they transition in the same way that end of year balances are agreed at present.
How will internal recharges (invoices) work going forwards? For example: Safety services, S&GS	You would pay for those services as you would any external supplier invoice. Your school would receive the invoice from the service directly for payment.
How will Special Schools process their OLA invoices to other Local Authorities?	They would have to raise an invoice to the other LA for payment as you would with any other payees.
We will need to be clear what Birmingham expect in relation to financial audit so that we are clear on what our Governing Bodies should be doing regarding terms of reference, financial delegation and systems of internal control upon transition to full chequebook status.	There has been an updated document linked through schools' noticeboard that can be found here: <a href="#">Framework of financial delegation for governing bodies   Birmingham City Council</a>
School staff are already stretched above capacity in their current roles. Who should pick up this extra responsibility?	We acknowledge that this change will result in new responsibilities in schools. None of the options available would have avoided some level of impact. We know there are schools who operate effectively as chequebook schools already and schools must think about where the new responsibilities sit best in their setting. There may also be opportunities to work together to share learning and experiences. It is important to note that there will be no additional funding associated with this change.

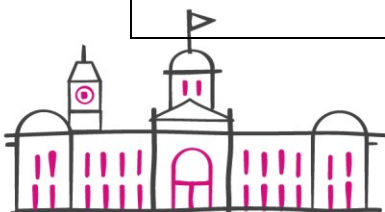
## 2. Questions around the procurement of new HR & Payroll providers, and the statutory duties that will remain for BCC as the employer

Question	Answer
Is BCC is making recommendations on Providers?	We won't be providing a list of recommended providers, but we will be sharing the findings of our market research. Working closely with the Department for Education Buying

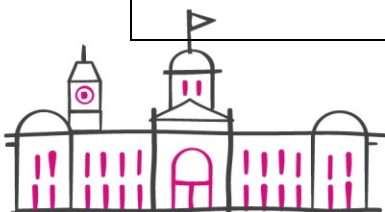




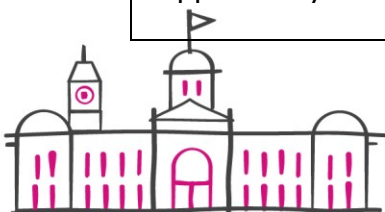
	for Schools team means that schools can draw on all the experience that team has, including their approved framework for providers of HR and Payroll services if that suits schools' needs.
Could you confirm whether the 6-month notice period is being waived as we move to new HR and Payroll providers?	We will be flexible with schools who want to leave the service outside of the normal six month notice period. We will work with schools and new suppliers to find a suitable timeline to ensure a smooth transition to the new provider.
Who do we liaise with at BCC once we have confirmed our new HR and Payroll provider?	Once you have confirmed your new provider and know the date which you would prefer to transfer to them, please ensure that you let BCC know. We will then be able to confirm if your transfer date is possible and start working with your new providers to ensure they get everything they need for a smooth transition. Please contact Heather Wheeler-Jones (HR) and Seamus Cooney (Payroll) on: <a href="mailto:heather.wheeler-jones@birmingham.gov.uk">heather.wheeler-jones@birmingham.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Seamus.Cooney@birmingham.gov.uk">Seamus.Cooney@birmingham.gov.uk</a>
Will there be any sort of specification we can use to find alternative providers ensuring we are meeting all of our obligations?	Using the current services in the current SLA you have would be a good place to start, but you know which services are most valuable to your school. The Department for Education Buying for Schools team are available to provide support on how to run a compliant procurement process, including what you might want to consider in a specification.
How many different HR providers do you anticipate being needed to meet the needs of so many schools so suddenly?	This fully depends on how schools choose to act. The number of providers is likely to be reduced if schools choose to take up the offer of support from Department for Education Buying for Schools team or decide to act together and leverage greater buying power. We are confident that there is capacity in the market for schools to move to a new provider.
It has been suggested that the DfE procurement service does not have a local focus and can be expensive. Can you reassure us about this?	The DfE 'Get help buying for schools' service includes a team of procurement specialists that can save you time and money by offering free support when you're buying any goods or services for your school. Their specialists can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer advice and guidance to make sure you're buying compliantly at any point, even if your procurement process is already in progress</li> <li>• review your documents to make sure they're complete and compliant - this includes advice on specification documents, tender documents and evaluation criteria</li> <li>• support you on choosing or using a framework agreement for your procurement</li> <li>• advise when you need to seek legal advice</li> </ul>



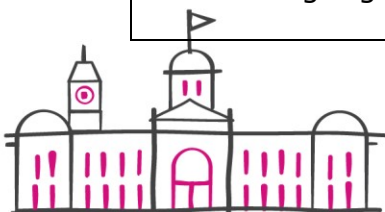
	<p>Their focus is on helping schools get the best value for money services. As shared at their webinar, the team can support with access to local suppliers if that is something that is important to schools.</p>
<p>Will information migrate over through support from BCC, or will this be the school's responsibility to start all of this fresh with a new provider?</p>	<p>BCC will support the transition of schools to their new service by working with schools and providers to manage a programme of offboarding. We will help to make sure you have all the policies, data and information required to move to a new provider.</p>
<p>When I moved one of my schools to an independent HR supplier, BCC made all the staff leavers and there were issues with pensions contributions. How will you make sure this doesn't happen?</p>	<p>We have spoken to some schools who have recently left BCC for alternative providers and are factoring in the lessons learned to the process to ensure that mistakes aren't made in the future. We want to support the transition of schools to their new service by working with schools and providers to manage a programme of offboarding.</p>
<p>When is the last BCC payroll?</p>	<p>The last possible BCC payroll will be in August 2025, with schools moving to their new provider from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025. A PowerPoint outlining the offboarding process and timelines, from the November Drop-In, can be found here: <a href="#">Offboarding HTSBM drop in - 20th November 2024</a></p>
<p>Do we need a new HMRC account when we are joining an external payroll provider? Does this generate a P45 for schools?</p>	<p>HR providers are well-established in setting up PAYE references as part of their on-boarding processes, but <u>please be aware that not all providers will be able to assist with this.</u> This process does generate a P45 as the previous reference is 'left'. This is administrative only and this will be a vital element to communicate with staff effectively, as part of the off-boarding process, so that there is no undue worry or concern.</p>
<p>What BCC will continue to do as part of our role as the employer in schools to meet our statutory duties after you move to a new HR/Payroll provider</p>	<p>We know that one of the areas of concern for schools is a lack of clarity about what BCC will continue to do as part of our role as the employer in schools to meet our statutory duties after you move to a new HR/Payroll provider. We have been working with all the impacted teams to understand what crucial activity will need to be continued. We have outlined the key areas for activity in the questions below.</p>
<p>What does BCC's statutory role look like in terms of Pensions?</p>	<p>Pensions funds still need to receive a single return from BCC so we will be receiving returns from schools or their payroll providers, checking and passing on to the pensions fund. This work will likely look very similar to now.</p>



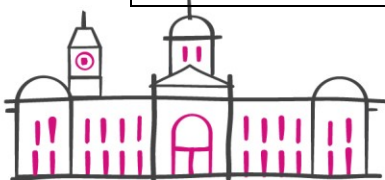
What does BCC's statutory role look like in terms of Assurance?	We will need to make sure that schools and their new providers are still operating under BCC terms and conditions and stay compliant with what we would expect. This might involve spot checks of contracts or job adverts, monitoring equal pay, or what pay and allowances staff are getting.
What does BCC's statutory role look like in terms of Reward and Pay?	BCC still needs to make sure that schools' staff are being paid properly and have access to all their usual benefits like cycle to work scheme. This will include things like communicating policy changes or pay awards to schools and providers.
What does BCC's statutory role look like in terms of Employee and Industrial Relations?	BCC will remain the employer of some schools' staff, so we need to make sure that we are there in those key steps like dismissals, disciplinaries or managing school union relationships. This might look like reviewing and signing off a school's restructure business case or sending out a dismissal letter, but we will only be acting on those steps where we have responsibility as the employer. If you need ER advice, you will have to ensure that your new provider can offer this.
What does BCC's statutory role look like in terms of Compliance?	BCC still needs to make sure staff in schools have all the right qualifications and checks in place. This might look like checking teaching assistants have appropriate qualifications or someone has the right to work in the UK before they take up a role in a school.
Will there be an Employee Relations service?	By ceasing to offer Schools HR services we will only be looking to continue activities that are required for us to deliver our statutory duties to schools as outlined above. Only the statutory elements of Employee Relations Service will remain. There will be no traded service.
Will BCC still be providing maintained schools access to policies? Currently, only Gold subscribers get access to these. Will this change going forward?	Yes, we will ensure that every school where BCC is the employer will have access to BCC policies. This will be all schools as Gold contract will not exist in the future.
After we have moved provider, will we be able to request HR information on cases dating back to previous years when we were supported by the BCC?	It is the responsibility of each school to maintain an accurate personnel file for all employees. This is part of our current SLAs. Schools should be making sure they hold all current and historical data. Oracle will be switched off for schools in September 2025 and we are working with the Oracle programme to establish how the data will be appropriately archived.



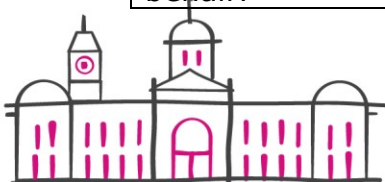
<p>HR submit the workforce pension on our behalf - who will do this in future?</p>	<p>The new payroll provider for the school will be required to submit the pension details in the required format to the BCC pensions team each month by the specified date. The BCC team will then collate and pass to the pension agencies. The employee and employer contributions will also need to be submitted to BCC to pay over on your behalf.</p>
<p>What pension information will BCC require from the new providers?</p>	<p>BCC will work with the new payroll providers to ensure that all pension information is provided back to BCC appropriately. This may have different processes depending on the provider, but BCC will continue to submit pension payments to all schemes on your behalf.</p>
<p>Will the pension funds all now have to liaise with multiple providers, or will this work come into schools?</p>	<p>No, they will direct all queries via the BCC office, who will liaise with the payroll provider/school.</p>
<p>Regarding policies and updates - How will schools, especially Academies, get this information once they have moved to a new provider?</p>	<p>BCC will make sure that any schools where BCC is the employer have access to all policies, job descriptions etc, and that any changes are communicated to both schools and their providers. BCC is exploring whether we are able to make policies available to other schools and academies where BCC is not the employer as we know there is a desire for parity in the Birmingham schools community where possible.</p>
<p>Will the Schools Workforce Census return to DfE still be done by BCC?</p>	<p>The data required to undertake the Schools Workforce Census (SWFC) will be retained by the individual schools HR/Payroll provider. It will therefore be the responsibility of the school to either submit the SWFC or to make arrangements for their provider to submit to the DfE on their behalf. For schools where BCC remains the employer, an audit process will be undertaken to check that schools are complying with this statutory return.</p>
<p>How will maintained schools issue their staff contracts?</p>	<p>Where BCC is the employer, we will still be able to provide relevant templates, but the school and/or their provider will be responsible for the issuance of contracts, ensuring that these are in line with BCC policies and procedures. BCC will conduct appropriate checks to make sure policies and procedures are being adhered to by schools and their chosen providers, with BCC acting as a final backstop to help avoid and identify the incorrect application of policy, procedure or T&amp;Cs and that they are rectified by schools if necessary.</p>
<p>Regarding pay review and salary boards - How is this going to be</p>	<p>BCC will work with schools and their chosen providers to communicate pay awards.</p>



fed down to all schools in Birmingham.	
If we move HR and Payroll provider before the current SLA expires on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025, will we automatically be refunded for any period for which we have already paid BCC, or do we have to request the reimbursement?	You will be reimbursed for these charges. Although these should be done automatically as we know your dates, we would always recommend for you to request reimbursement with dates through the usual service communication channels to ensure swift payment.
Will the team for pensions still be contactable? What is the mechanism for issues, especially if the new provider makes an error which only surfaces 5 years later?	Any queries on data will be passed back to the payroll provider or the school to answer as it is their data. Contact details at BCC are in the current SLA and will continue to be provided for each pension scheme as part of the statutory duties that will remain for BCC as the employer post transition.
Is there specific guidance around how to apply for the new PAYE reference for our school?	Yes, specific guidance is included in the update information above. Your new payroll provider should support this process, and BCC will be liaising with them as part of the off-boarding process. Please note that not all providers will be able to assist in this regard and schools will need to undertake the steps in the process on their own without support from their provider where that is the case.
Will the P45s issued go to schools or the staffs' home addresses?	As part of the current process, P45s are automatically sent to staff's home addresses. BCC will be issuing schools with a letter for schools to send to staff on BCC's behalf that outlines why they will be receiving them and that they should not worry as it is administrative only.
Will P45 affect any benefits that staff receive?	The crossover to your new provider should be instantaneous, with no break in service and the previous information regarding tax codes and cumulative income etc. transferring as part of the process.
Will P45s affect tax codes in any way? Can you confirm that emergency tax won't be taken?	Tax codes should remain the same and will be included the final reports provided to the new provider and these should be continued going forward. In reality, tax codes change relatively frequently, and a system called Real Time Information, RTI, should ensure that



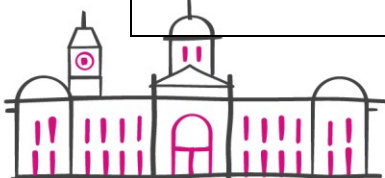
	tax code information can be exchanged with the revenue in real time.
Does this affect continuous service in any way? This may affect sickness, maternity pay etc.	No, the historical start is retained. There is no break in service for employment purposes.
We understand that the timescales provided by BCC for off-boarding include two dummy payroll runs with the new provider. Can we do more of less than this?	BCC is advising two dummy payroll runs as a minimum. However, three dummy runs are not preferred, so that we can off-board schools steadily throughout the remaining months.
Will BCC still undertake DBS checks for our school?	For DBS checks you will need to locate an alternative umbrella body. It maybe that your new provider will offer this service, alternatively you can find a list here <a href="#">Find a DBS umbrella body company - GOV.UK</a>
How will schools be able to place adverts - will the portal still be available? Will this attract a cost? Please can we have more detail on how schools can continue to place adverts on the BCC job bulletins.	Recruitment through BCC will no longer be available, however the DfE are offering a new free advertising service for schools. You can find more information here. <a href="#">Teaching, leadership and support jobs - Teaching Vacancies - GOV.UK</a>
We intend to move to another provider, to begin on April 1st 2025. We understand that there may be a cross-over period before our intended end date. Are we correct in assuming that the year-end returns (Payroll and Pensions) for 2024-5 will still be completed by BCC on our behalf?	That is correct – BCC Payroll & Pensions’ will undertake all its end of financial year tasks & responsibilities, in line with the current Service Level Agreements



<p>Will schools be charged for the statutory provision in relation to HR, Payroll, pensions and finance? If so, what does it cost and how will it be taken from schools?</p>	<p>The statutory role BCC will undertake as the employer will not incur any cost to schools.</p>
<p>BHSF – Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund. Some schools that are academising are losing this benefit. Is there somewhere to get information to give to new employers, so that they continue this useful public sector health benefit?</p>	<p>Where BCC remains the employer access to benefits will continue. Where you are moving to a different employer individuals can take their BHSF plan with them. Call the helpdesk at BHSF on 0121 4543601 and they can transfer it to a direct debit HCP. Please note this although this will have similar services that you can claim on, it will not be the same HCP and it will be more expensive than a corporate one.</p>
<p>When can we get the full HR and Payroll off-boarding information from BCC, similar to that provided for going chequebook?</p>	<p>The basic offboarding process is detailed in the slides from the November Drop-in available earlier in this document. A toolkit is currently being drafted and will be shared with schools as part of the off-boarding process. We are planning on including the example reports / templates in the update on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, and the Drop-in on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January will focus on how they are to be used. There is also information earlier in this update, published previously, around registering for new PAYE Scheme reference numbers.</p>
<p>Can we please have example off-boarding documents / reports through noticeboard, as we currently have no idea what to expect.</p>	<p>The data provided by Schools HR will be on the templates that will be included in next week's update. You do not need to do anything with this data, other than forward it to your new provider. Payroll will also issue the following data from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy payslips.</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Vendor details</li> <li>• HMRC / FPS files</li> <li>• Maternity schedules</li> <li>• Attachment of Earnings details</li> </ul>

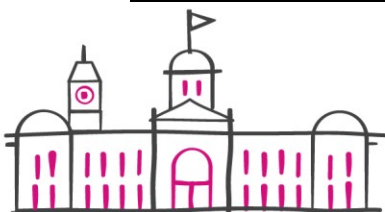


<p>In terms of preparation for off-boarding, is there anything that schools can do now to get ahead of the game, so they are ready for the off-boarding information that is provided the month before dummy runs begin with their new supplier?</p>	<p>From a BCC perspective there is nothing you need to do to prepare before you are provided with the data for transfer. The activity commences once your data has been input into your new system, when you will need to undertake data cleansing to ensure your new system contains the correct information.</p> <p>Through working with your new provider, you can ensure you understand their requirements and expectations and are trained in the use of your new system.</p> <p>All the providers that BCC have been made aware of have been given copies of templates that we are sending to school. So, your providers know exactly what you are getting.</p> <p>If they are asking you for things that are not in the spreadsheet, they should already know that you have not got them from BCC. One to consider is that none of our data sets include e-mail addresses for staff, so it might be helpful to have these ready to send so that staff can access digital pay slips etc.</p>
<p>What should we expect when receiving off-boarding data and what support will we get from BCC services?</p>	<p>We will send you an email on the Monday of the week you are due to receive HR and Payroll off-boarding data, to let you know what to expect.</p> <p>Your data from HR and Payroll will arrive in two separate emails, possibly on different days due to the way it is generated. It is vitally important to pass this data on to your new provider, in whatever format they would like it, as soon as possible.</p> <p>We have planned two MS Teams drop-in sessions (links below), to give you an opportunity to discuss the information that you receive. The first meeting is on the Wednesday of the week you will receive your data and focusses on the off-boarding data transfer. The second drop-in is scheduled before your first dummy Payroll run in the second week of the following month. Please note that your new HR and Payroll providers are invited to these follow-up meetings, as they may be best placed to help iron out any issues arising. All dates and links will be in the Oracle update above.</p> <p>To get support around any HR off-boarding issues, please contact your link HR officer or Heather Wheeler-Jones. For Payroll off-boarding queries there is a new, dedicated mailbox shown below: <a href="mailto:SchoolsPayrollOffBoardingQueries@birmingham.gov.uk">SchoolsPayrollOffBoardingQueries@birmingham.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<p>Can we use the same payroll numbers for our provider that our staff currently have?</p>	<p>Your new provider can use any number they want as long as they haven't allocated it already. It will depend on how their system works though, in terms of how many digits their system uses.</p>





<p>Where would our new providers find the details in terms of applying leave entitlement for staff?</p>	<p>You will need to make sure that your new provider has copies of all your HR and a general policies. They should be following the policies that you are using within school, which in many cases will be BCC policies adapted for your setting and signed off by your governors. There's no reason that they wouldn't know this in terms of the support staff, as they follow the green book. Teaching staff do not have holidays that they can book and neither do the majority of support staff in schools.</p>
<p>Sometimes Payroll reports can have up to 20 lines for each staff member. Is there a reason for a particular reason for this?</p>	<p>In chequebook school reports, if a staff member has a retrospective payment for two years, it is shown month by month (24 lines) and nothing can be done with the report unfortunately. You should be able to use a pivot table to tidy up this information for easier consolidation in school. Apologies for any extra work this causes.</p>
<p>Will we still have access to Oracle and the HR website after we have transitioned to our new provider?</p>	<p>At the point of off boarding, access to Oracle and the HR website will stop. Schools will need to make sure that employees are aware of this and download any documents from Oracle, such as payslips and P60s, that they might want to have access to.</p>
<p>Regarding school staff working for unions part time, and how there is appropriate segregation of the salary charges post transition?</p>	<p>This has been highlighted as needing to be worked through, however I don't believe that any decision have been made yet in relation to how this will work from April 2025, this is something that the industrial relations team is aware of and I think will be responsible for moving forward.</p>
<p>Will schools leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> March get P60s from BCC?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, no. As they are leaving prior to April 5<sup>th</sup> BCC cannot produce them. This will be communicated to staff in the letter about P45s, mentioned earlier, that schools leaving in March should receive in February. No other cohorts are affected by this. Staff in school actually have their annual pay from April to March, so your March payslip has a clear record of gross and net earnings, alongside any deductions. Please note that a Statement of Earnings can be generated by BCC for staff who may need a P60 document rather than their March payslip. This has the information needed for benefits and HMRC purposes. It is important to note that Payroll will still exist for BCC after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and as such will still be contactable about such issues.  <a href="#">A letter to school staff, explaining this and other items is being issued from BCC as outlined in the headlines.</a></p>



Should we remain with BCC HR and Payroll until 6 <sup>th</sup> April to overcome this?	This would not solve the issue as BCC do not do part months, and also your pay to 31 <sup>st</sup> March is your annual earnings.
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### 3. Questions and answers on the uncertain future of Schools Financial Services

Questions	Answers
Please can we have a timeline for SFS costs and decision regarding its future communicated with schools.	The new SLA for SFS was circulated on 15 November 2024. Schools have until Wednesday 15 January 2025 to notify BCC of their decision, upon which the review of this service will be completed. The documents can be found here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SLA confirmation letter from Dr Sue Harrison</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Schools Financial Services provision 2025</a></li> </ul>
If enough schools sign up to the new SFS SLA, and the review decides that SFS can continue to trade as a service, will there be recruitment to meet the demands of every school?	We will ensure that the financial expertise and staffing capacity is there for the service required and further recruitment will be made if necessary.
As we will all be chequebook schools, will SFS colleagues have enhanced training so that they can assist schools, especially in regard to the reporting demands that schools will have.	Yes, all SFS finance officers are receiving training to support FCB schools.
SFS already have a statutory role monitoring school's compliance that was funded from DSG. Will this continue?	Yes

